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CSR News

Chevron Trying to Orchestrate Disbarment of Attorney Who Won Large Pollution Case; Claims "Threat to the Public Order"

Donziger: First Department Decision Based On Judge Kaplan's False And Disputed Findings In Ecuador Case; No Hearing Allowed

Submitted by: **Amazon Defense Coalition - FDA**

Categories: **Environment, Activism**

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NEW YORK, Jul. 10 /CSRwire/ - After years of litigation over its massive pollution problem in Ecuador, Chevron has now orchestrated the suspension of human rights lawyer Steven R. Donziger without a hearing on the grounds that he represents "a threat to the public order" in the United States after he led the successful legal battle that resulted in a landmark \$12b environmental judgment against the company.

The oil company's latest move – designed to undermine the rights of Ecuadorian Indigenous peoples and farmer communities to enforce their pollution judgment – was met with harsh criticism from environmental activists and other observers.

"What Chevron and the New York bar are trying to do to Steven Donziger, a true leader of the environmental movement who has worked years to hold a large oil company accountable for its ecological crimes, is nothing short of an outrage that should be condemned by the legal profession and the world community as a whole," said Rex Weyler, founder of Greenpeace and an ally of the Ecuadorian communities.

Donziger vowed to appeal the ruling from the First Department, a New York based intermediate appellate court, to suspend him immediately pending a hearing on the appropriate discipline. Never before in the history of bar grievance proceedings has an attorney been suspended based on disputed findings of act without being given a hearing, Donziger said.

Here is Donziger's statement:

The case on which the First Department rests its decision to suspend me without a hearing was based largely on false testimony paid for by Chevron and presented by an admittedly corrupt witness coached 53 days by company lawyers prior to taking the stand. The entire case was designed to retaliate against me for my role in holding the company accountable for the deliberate dumping of billions of gallons of toxic waste in Ecuador -- dumping which decimated Indigenous peoples and created an environmental catastrophe that continues to cause grave harm to vulnerable communities in the Amazon rainforest.

Chevron's paid-for witness testimony resulted in findings by Judge Kaplan which I maintain are either false or distorted and which 21 different appellate judges in Ecuador and Canada have determined to be false in whole or in part. To base attorney discipline on Judge Kaplan's disputed findings without even providing me a hearing is a gross injustice. Despite this unfortunate decision, I will

continue to fight for my Ecuadorian clients around the world to ensure that Chevron is held accountable and pays the full amount of the judgment against it. I also will appeal the First Department's decision, which was issued in perfunctory fashion and largely ignores the numerous and complex legal and factual issues raised in my submissions.

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